

**James Madison to Samuel H. Smith, February 2, 1827. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.**

**TO SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH.<sup>1</sup>**

1 From the original owned by the late J. Henley Smith, of Washington, D. C.

Montpellier, Feby 2, 1827.

Dear Sir I have received, with your favour of Jany. 24, a copy of your biographical Memoir of Ths. Jefferson delivered before the Columbian Institute; and I can not return my thanks without congratulating the Institute, on its choice of the hand to which the preparation of the Memoir was assigned. The subject was worthy of the Scientific and patriotic Body which espoused it, and the manner in which it has been treated, worthy of the subject. The only blemishes to be noted on the face of the memoir are the specks, in which the partiality of the friend betrays itself towards one of the names occasionally mentioned.

I have great respect for your suggestion with respect to the season for making public what I have preserved of the proceedings of the Revolutionary Congress, and the General Convention of 1787. But I have not yet ceased to think that publications of them, posthumous to others as well as myself, may be most delicate, and most useful too, if to be useful at all. As no personal or party views can then be imputed, they will be read with less of personal or party feelings, and consequently with whatever profit may be promised by them. It is true also that after a certain date, the older such things grow, the more they are relished as new; the distance of time like that of space from which they are received, giving them that attractive character.

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It cannot be very long however before the living obstacles to the forthcomings in question will be removed. Of the members of Congress during the period embraced, the lamps of all are extinct, with the exception I believe of Rd. Peters & myself, and of the signers of the Constitution of all but R. King, Wm. Few & myself; and of the lamps still burning, none can now be far from the socket.

It will be long before this can be said of yours, & that which pairs with it; and I pray you both to be assured of the sincere wish, in which Mrs. M. joins me, that in the mean time every happiness may await you.